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SONGS OF THE HEART.

W. BLAKE ATKINSON.

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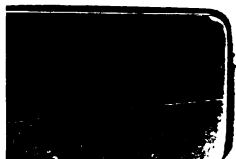


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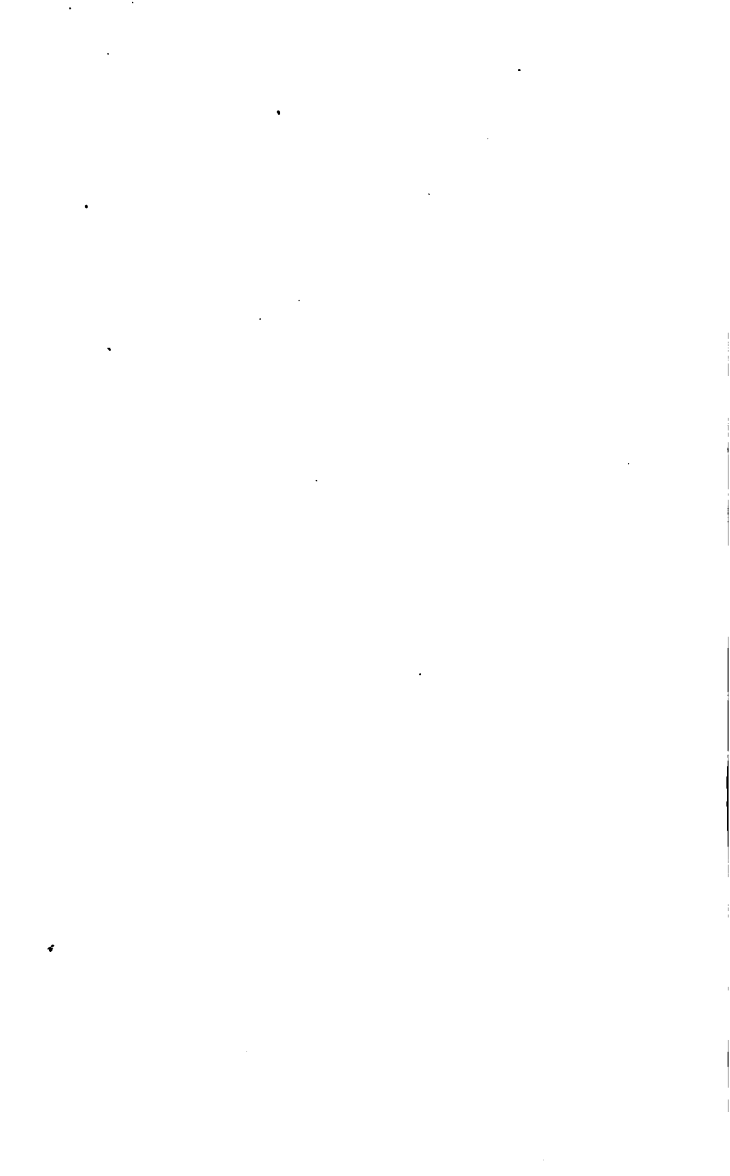


Presented to
Harvard College,
Cambridge, Mass.,
United States of America,
in memory of
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow,
by the Author.

August, 1892.

(Bradley Rectory,
near Redditch,
England.)

SONGS OF THE HEART.



SONGS OF THE HEART:

Poems on Various Subjects.

BY

William

W. BLAKE ATKINSON.

" Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start."

LONGFELLOW.

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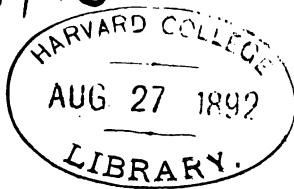
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1871.

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The Auction

To

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, Esq.,
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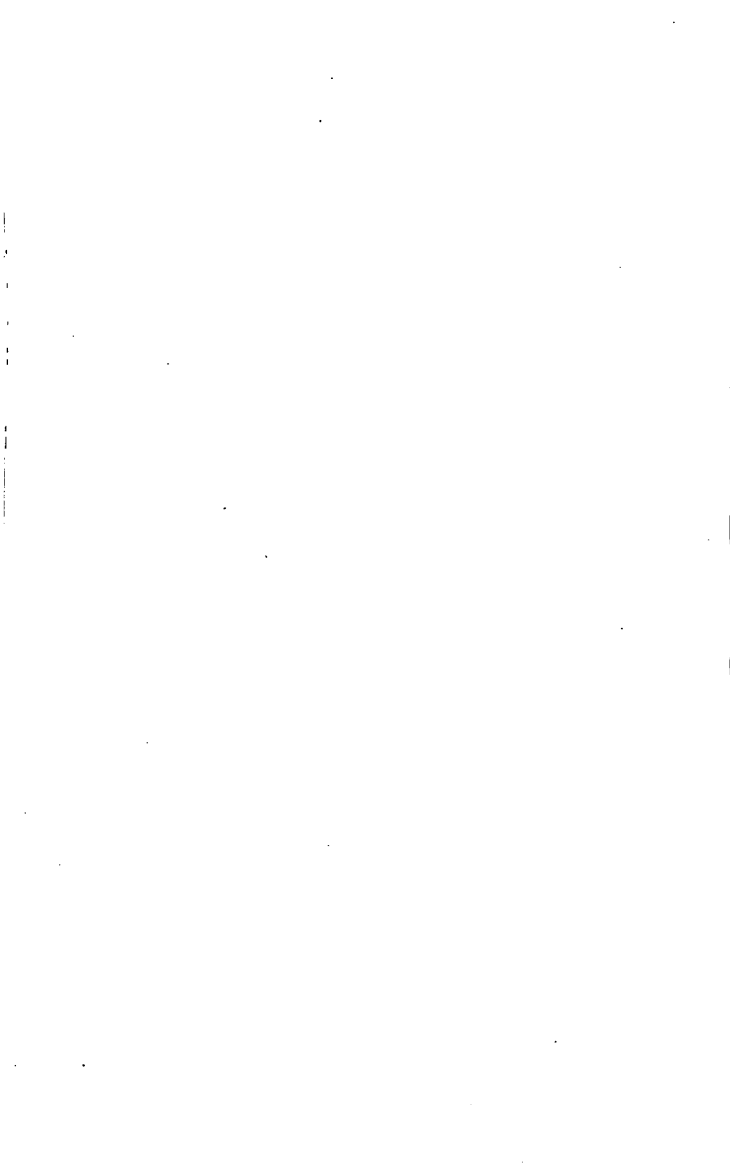
THIS VOLUME OF POEMS IS

(BY HIS KIND PERMISSION,)

Affectionately Dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

Accept, kind Sir, these simple songs of mine,
The honest utterance of a youthful heart,
That seeks the joys to others to impart
Which on its hours of contemplation shine :
Accept these humble, unpretending lays,
That would the features of thy verse reflect,
As a warm tribute of sincere respect ;
And deem whate'er thy judgment finds to praise,
If aught of praise should to my book belong,
A loving echo to thy distant song.



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P R E F A C E.

THE following Poems pretend to be nothing more than simple and unstudied effusions upon familiar topics, written during occasional hours of leisure. The youthful Author is emboldened to place them before the public by the generous reception which was accorded to a local volume published by him a few years ago.

Should this book succeed in ministering comfort to one sorrowing spirit, or afford the reader in its perusal one-half of the pleasure which it has given the Author in its composition, these "Songs of the Heart" will not have been written in vain.

W. B. A.

Stone Hall, Wallingford,

JUNE, 1871.





SONGS OF THE HEART.

THE CRUSADER ; OR, THE POWER OF LOVE

A GALLANT knight went forth to war,
To fight the battles of the Lord ;
And on his breast a cross he bore,
And at his side his faithful sword.

A solemn vow to heaven he made
That cross to wear, that sword to wield,
The foremost in the bold crusade
That dared the Crescent to the field.

He prayed for courage and for might
To break the ranks of error down,
The battle of the Cross to fight,
And win the faithful soldier's crown.

With eager heart and fiery glance,
He went the heathen hosts to meet,
The first to lead the van's advance,
The last to cover the retreat.

His good sword's sturdy strokes ne'er tired,
His bravest foes beneath them bled ;
His comrades, with new hearts inspired,
Followed the way his helmet led.

But vain the valour of his arm,
And vain his name of high renown,
To shield him from impending harm,
Or break the ranks of error down :

For, after many a deed of fame,
The victor of a hundred fields,
Whom single-handed none could tame,
To overwhelming numbers yields.

Wounded and weary, fainting fast,
'Mid fallen friends and foes he fell,
Yet battled nobly to the last,
With courage no defeat could quell.

They raised him senseless from the ground,
Where thick the dead and dying lay,
His bleeding limbs with thongs they bound,
And captive bore him far away.

They thrust him in a noisome cell,
By fierce and cruel gaolers kept,
Where scarce a ray of sunshine fell,
And scarce a breath of heaven crept.

Then murmurs in his heart arose,
He cursed his hard and bitter fate,
And thought on his victorious foes
With feelings of revengeful hate.

But soon upon his gloomy soul
The dawn of brighter reason broke ;
A better spirit o'er him stole,
And words of consolation spoke.

For, musing, on his Lord he thought,
Who once the cross for others bore,
And on the fearful fight He fought,
And on the thorny crown He wore.

And, at the vision calmer grown,
His Master's praise so loud he sang,
The heathen stronghold's walls of stone
With songs of Christian triumph rang.

His keepers heard the joyful flow
With wond'ring ears and awe-struck heart,
And oft they sought the cause to know,
And oft the cause he would impart.

He spoke of Him who lived of old,
His loving deeds, His many tears ;
And all the wondrous tale he told
Sank deep into their list'ning ears.

And, hearkening to that tale of love,
The like of which they ne'er had heard,
Their hearts, that fear could never move,
Melted beneath each gentle word.

And far and wide around they spread
The news the captive Christian bore,
And all the mighty truths he said
Were oft repeated o'er and o'er.

Then from his tortured hands and feet
They loosed each bolt and struck each chain,
And offered him an escort fleet
To bear him to his home again.

They brought him back his trusty sword,
The armour and the cross he wore,
And bade him go to serve his Lord
Upon the battle-field once more.—

Awhile he hesitating stands,
Frees from his sword each little stain ;
Then grasps it firmly in his hands,
And snaps its shining blade in twain.—

He thanked them for their kind behest,
And with a broken voice he spoke ;
But told them how within his breast
Another spirit now had woke ;

And how henceforth he meant to dwell
Among them, guiding all their ways,
And thus for Him he loved so well
To spend the remnant of his days.

From that time forth with them he dwelt ;
Their feet in paths of peace he led ;
Beside the bed of pain he knelt,
Held in his hands the dying head ;

And long that wondrous tale he told
To which at first their ear they lent,
Until, with years and honour old,
His noble spirit homeward went.

And thus at duty's post he died :
Thousands, his loss lamenting, wept,
And in that region far and wide
His memory for long they kept.

And thus, by God's own Spirit wrought,
He broke the ranks of error down,
The battle of the Cross he fought,
And won the faithful soldier's crown.



THE WAY OF PEACE.

MY heart was weary with a woe
I strove to rid me of in vain ;
No respite did my spirit know ;
Each day but added to my pain :
It was the heavy weight of sin
That burdened all my soul within.

And far and wide around I sought
Some friend to take my load away ;
But none availed to ease me aught,
And I was powerless as they,
And still my anguish more and more,
With growing power, oppressed me sore.

I saw far off the happy home
Where God among His saints resides,
Where sin and grief can never come,
And peace eternally abides ;
While on my ear fell faint but sweet
The hymns the ransomed host repeat.

Thrice weary then, with tearful eyes,
I gazed upon the blessed band
Who taste the endless joys that rise
Within that everlasting land :
A longing rose within my breast
To reach that home and be at rest.

In eager haste I strove to find
Some pathway to the holy place,
And, leaving all I had behind,
I steadfast towards it set my face,
And took the nearest, straightest road
That led to that divine abode.

But when at length the gate I neared
Of the bright realm I sought to win,
A man of awful mien appeared,
Who said I might not enter in,
That while I bore my load of care
I could not gain admittance there.

Hopeless and helpless, sick at heart,
I sat me down the road beside,
And mourned my sad and bitter part
With tears that would not be denied,
And cursed, as evil in God's sight,
The day when first I saw the light.

When, lo ! I felt a gentle hand,
And, looking up with weeping eyes,
Beheld a man before me stand
Of humble look and simple guise,
And yet there sat upon his face
A beautiful, unearthly grace.

He asked my grief—I told him all—
He bade me rise and follow him—
I rose, obedient to his call,
And, though my eyes with tears were dim,

There was such sweetness in his voice,
It made my troubled heart rejoice.

Straight from that spot he took me back
O'er all the road I late had been,
And led me by a devious track,
Which never I before had seen,
Until we reached a lowly gate,
At which he bade me knock and wait.

I knocked and waited—opening quick,
The narrow gate a path disclosed,
Stony and rough, with brambles thick,
By overhanging rocks enclosed.
In anger then I turned again,
And asked why thus he mocked my pain.

With searching glance he looked at me,
Half pitiful and half severe,
And asked if I indeed would be
Rid of my weight of guilt and fear,
And said that through no gate but this
Could I attain the realm of bliss.

He told me how, in suffering sore,
Himself had traced that path along,
Which none had ever trod before,
Though since had passed a countless throng.
His name I questioned of my guide—
He told me, "Christ the crucified."

Abashed before His feet I fell—

He bade me rise, my course pursue—
But I was fain my tale to tell,

And graciously He heard me through—
I owned my guilt, confessed my sin,
Bent my proud head, and entered in.

And, as I journey on my way,

Through cloud and sunshine, smiles and tears,
Nearer and clearer, day by day,

The goal of all my hopes appears ;
And, though the path is rough to me,
My heart is light, my soul is free.



UPWARD AND ONWARD.

"Faint, yet pursuing."—Judges viii. 4.

ART thou worn and weary,
Child of earth and sin ?
Is the prospect dreary,
And the heart within ?
Do thy work and mission
Fruitless prove to thee,
And thy hopes a vision
That but seems to flee ?

Up, and break the fetter
Of each dark delay !
Waiting for the better,
Labour day by day !
Soon the seed shall render
Its unfailing yield,
In the wealth and splendour
Of the harvest-field !

Art thou faint and fearful
In the fight of life,
Though so brave and cheerful
In thine early strife ?
Art thou gazing round thee
For the means to fly ?
Have new terrors found thee,
And the fear to die ?

Strive with stout endeavour,
Till the danger's past !
Yield the vantage never ;
Hold it to the last !
Angel faces o'er thee
Lovingly look down ;
And there waiteth for thee
An eternal crown !

Art thou lorn and lonely,
With no earthly friend,
Moving forward only
To the wished-for end ;
Not one glimpse of heaven,
When thou lookest up,
Not one soothing leaven
In thy bitter cup ?

Still, right onward pressing,
With new courage go !
God will bring a blessing
Out of every woe !
Hope for each to-morrow ;
Trust for each to-day !
Soon the tears of sorrow
Shall be wiped away !



LIFE IN DEATH.

“ O H, throw the window open,
Let in the evening air,
For hot and fev’rish is my brow,
Weary with pain and care,
And I would feel the blessed breeze,
Once more before I die,
Steal through the open window,
And reach me where I lie.
It breathes to me of heaven,
Where now I soon shall be,
And seems to whisper to my soul
Of all I long to see.”

They open wide the window—soft and low,
The breath of heaven fans upon his brow.

“ Oh, draw aside the curtain
That hides the setting sun,
For I would see his light once more
Before his race is run.
I always loved to watch him sink
Down in the golden west,
And always wished that I might go
As gently to my rest.
He seems to beckon to some land
Of glory far away,
Where death and darkness end at length
In everlasting day.”

They draw aside the curtain—fair and bright,
The light of heaven breaks upon his sight.

“Oh, sing some song of gladness,
Some hymn of joy and praise,
That used to cheer my fainting heart,
E'en in my darkest days.
However sad to other ears
Their melody may be,
I seem the nearer heaven
When they are sung to me.
And to that realm of happiness
I may them with me bear,
For, though you cannot go with me,
Your songs may enter there.”

They sing that song of gladness—loud and clear,
The hymns of heaven burst upon his ear.



THE RETURN OF THE DOVE.

(SUGGESTED BY THE PICTURE BY MR. GEO. FRED. WATTS, R.A.,
IN THE ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION OF 1869.)

"And the dove came in to him in the evening ; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off : so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth."—Genesis viii. 11.

AS round the wat'ry waste
The shades of evening gather far and wide,
Herald of peace, thou fliest on with haste
Across the trackless tide.

Impelled by Him, whose might
Calmed the fierce flood and bade the billows rest,
Thou need'st no landmark to direct thy flight
Back to thy floating nest.

The fresh green olive-tree
Tempts thee in vain thy mission to delay :
A "leaf pluckt off" the happy sign to be,
Thou turnest back thy way.

The tidings thou dost bring
Will earn for thee, fair dove, a welcome sweet,
A place where thou shalt fold thy restless wing
And ease thy weary feet.

Speed on, thou blessed bird !
Bearer of better hope to sinful man
Than eager eyes have seen or ears have heard
Since first his course began :—

Emblem of that sweet peace
Which by the grace of God to man is giv'n,
When floods of fear and storms of sorrow cease
At the command of Heav'n ;

When over trouble's sea
Flies to the fainting soul the Holy Dove,
The messenger of joy and liberty
From the great God of love.



THE CALLING OF THE CHILDREN.*

"He shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."
—Isaiah xl. 11.

"Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God."—Mark x. 14.

IT is the voice of Him
Who bids the children come
To joys that never shall grow dim,
Within His happy home.

They hear that blessed voice ;
It soothes their wild alarms :
Their loving little hearts rejoice ;
They fly into His arms.

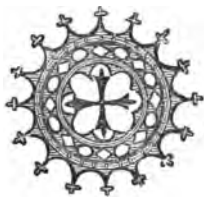
He folds them to His breast ;
They nestle fondly there,
And in His tender keeping rest,
For ever young and fair,—

Safe from the blight of sin,
From pain, and grief, and hate,
Where death can never enter in
To change their blest estate.

* Written upon some little children who died of a fever.

Not here, not here below,
Are they whose loss ye weep :
A morn no mortal eyes can know
Has roused them from their sleep.

Not in the ground they lie,
Not in the churchyard rest ;
But in the mansions of the sky,
Upon the Saviour's breast.



A VISION OF JOY.

“And there shall be no more curse.”—Revelation xxii. 3.

I HAD a vision, fair without a stain,
Of that sweet rest the ransomed people gain,
Where never enters any grief or pain.

I watched, when on that region's threshold bright,
Upon the eyes hidden till then in night,
In beams of beauty burst the living light.

Then to the deaf their loving Master spoke :
Their slumb'ring sense to heed that summons woke ;
And on their ears the angels' anthem broke.

The thankful dumb regained their loosened tongue,
And their Redeemer's praise enraptured sung,
Till Heaven's walls with new-found voices rung.

While, rising joyfully their Lord to meet,
I saw the lame leap lightly on their feet,
And hasten on upon the golden street.

Not one who entered that celestial door
With him one trace of earth's pollution bore
To that sweet rest which lasts for evermore.

THE VILLAGE CHURCH.

THERE is a little village church,
With walls of time-worn stone,
Crowned by a square, embattled tower,
With ivy over-grown ;

Half hidden by a grove of trees,
That year by year have shed
Their leaves upon the humble mounds
That lie above the dead.

Upon a pleasant hill it stands,
And far around are seen
Its grey old walls and green old tower,
Peeping the trees between.

And from that church, o'er distant fields,
Oft on the breeze there swells
The music of that blessed sound,
The sound of Sabbath bells.

The lowly dwellings of the poor
Around it gather near ;
And, in a cluster at its foot,
Their straw-thatched roofs appear.

From early youth to hoary age,
The villagers have trod
Yon path that upward leads the way
Into the house of God ;

And there, in one unending train,
From immemorial days,
Have met to join the heartfelt prayer
And heartfelt song of praise.

And, while within its ancient walls
The sons their Sabbaths keep,
Their fathers underneath its shade
Lie in their last long sleep.

Oh ! there a soothing quiet reigns
I never find elsewhere :
It smiles amid the mellowed light,
And floats upon the air.

No high-born folk in rich attire
Within it take their seat :
But none the less sincere are they
Who there to worship meet.

The preacher's language might to some
Rough and untutored seem ;
For simple are his earnest words,
As simple as his theme :

But 'tis the sweet simplicity
Of truth's unstudied speech,
That enters where no honied words
Of eloquence could reach.

No wondrous anthems there are heard,
Nor lofty strains of art ;
But hymns with holy music fraught,
The music of the heart.

No sculptured columns there are found,
Nor windows rich in hue :
But yet it wears a lovely grace
That captivates the view.

It may be that the seats are old,
And that the floor is worn,
And that no marble monuments
The modest walls adorn :

It may be there is naught to please
The high artistic mind,
And that the cultivated eye
No beauty there may find.

But old associations cling
Around the sacred spot,
Which make me find a charm therein
That others notice not.

For there my memory travels back,
With footsteps light and fast,
And calls up voices of the loved,
And visions of the past ;

While spirits of a by-gone day
Enter the open door,
And whisper through the shady aisles,
And glide along the floor.

'Twas there my mother led me first,
Across the churchyard sod,
And taught my little lips to lisp
The holy name of God ;

And one, whose love in youth I sought
My lot in life to share,
Has passed with me beneath its porch,
And sat beside me there.

Thus, thoughts of childhood's innocence
And dreams of early love
Have underneath that roof appeared
As blessings from above ;

While often on the day of rest,
The sweetest of the seven,
That earthly temple's quietude
Seemed like a glimpse of heaven.

Long, long may I, with gladdened heart,
Frequent the dear old place,
As long as life has left a spark,
Or memory a trace !

And, when at length the summons comes
Of Heaven's wise decree,
That calls me from this world away,
Another world to see,—

I would not that my bones should lie
In monumental state,
Within some mighty minster hid
In costly tomb and great :

But I would choose some peaceful nook,
That village church beside,
Where underneath the turf they might
The last great day abide ;

That often in the evening-time,
When summer skies are fair,
And all the villagers go up
Into the house of prayer,—

Their feet, along the well-known path,
Beside the stone may tread,
That rises where my body rests
Among the village dead ;

And, when their holy hymns arise
Within the hallowed fane,
May through the open window pass
The foot-falls of the strain,

And out into the churchyard steal,
Amid the flowers that wave
Beneath the gentle evening breeze
Upon my grass-grown grave.



SPRING.

THE Spring went forth in triumph
To weave her spell of might,
And throw a trail of beauty
Beneath her fairy flight,
To clothe the woods with verdure,
To deck their barren bow'rs,
And over hill and valley
To cast her wreath of flow'rs.

The skies were bright above her ;
The earth, where'er she went,
To hail her joyful coming,
A welcome upward sent ;
On gentle winds she journeyed
O'er mountain, down, and dell,
While on her path in splendour
The sunlight streaming fell.

The winter, at her advent,
His icy throne forsook,
And trembled at her presence,
And melted at her look :
The storms relaxed their fury,
And drew their curtain back,
And stretched an arch of glory
Across her shining track.

Above the hills she hovered,
While underneath her feet
In clusters sprung the daisies,
As if her touch to greet :
She wandered o'er the meadows,
And from their grassy mould
The buttercups and cowslips
Arose in sheets of gold :

Then through the woods she rambled,
The violet she woke,
And at her gentle summons
The primrose upward broke :—
Until with bud and blossom
The ground was thick and bright,
As shine the stars of heaven
Upon the brow of night.

Meanwhile, as ever onward
With joyful wing she flew,
O'er wood, and field, and meadow
Her magic glance she threw ;
Till over all the landscape
The bloom of youth appeared,
And earth's ten thousand forests
Their crown of verdure reared.

And, in her train awaking,
The song of bee and bird,
No longer sad and silent,
On every side was heard :

The lark, on soaring pinion,
Poured forth its lay of love ;
The cuckoo roused the thicket,
The nightingale the grove :

The winds made pleasant music
Upon the mountain side,
And down in peaceful valleys
The merry brooks replied :
While troops of happy children,
The hidden glades among,
Swelled with their cheerful chorus
The universal song.

And still, as Spring rejoicing,
Her pleasant journey ran,
She ever lingered lightly
Above the haunts of man :
She filled with hope and gladness
The dwellings of the poor,
And drove the dreary winter
Far from their lowly door :

Into the sick man's chamber
She poured a flood of light,
And strewed her fairest flowers
Before his gladdened sight ;
She shook her sweetest perfume
From out the hawthorn bough,
And wafted gentle breezes
Upon his weary brow :

Around the saddened spirit
 She shed her brightest smile ;
And visited the mourner,
 His sorrow to beguile :—
Till hearts with grief long burdened
 With others joined to sing
The song of joy and triumph
 That welcomed back the Spring.



HARVEST.

HURRAH ! hurrah for harvest ! it is with us once
again ;

It is climbing up the sloping hills, and creeping o'er the
plain ;

It spreads a train of triumph, and a golden garland
weaves,

And crowns the laughing landscape with a diadem of
sheaves.

With its ever-welcome treasures, and its stores of precious
grain,

Hurrah ! hurrah for harvest ! for 'tis with us once again.

The heats of sultry noontide, the dews of eve and morn
Have nourished, fed, and ripened the wide-spread fields of
corn :

The sun has poured upon them its rays of warmth and
light,

And the moonbeams fallen o'er them in the tranquil hours
of night :

Across their face spring showers and summer storms have
passed ;

They have rustled underneath the breeze, and rolled be-
fore the blast.

And now the sturdy reaper comes, at the call of harvest-
time,

And the ready grain is levelled, in all its golden prime :

It bows before the sickle's edge, and sinks upon the ground ;
By willing hands 'tis gathered, and in sheaves together
 bound,
Which, piled upon the close-reaped fields, range far before
 the sight,
And in the fading twilight seem like an army camped at
 night.

Soon the happy cry of " Harvest home " floats through
 the evening air,
And a thousand cheerful voices tell of gladness every-
 where ;
And, with overflowing gratitude for a gracious Father's
 love,
While thus He pours His gifts below, we raise our hearts
 above,
And, for all the joys and blessings that follow in its train,
Thank God for sending harvest to be with us once again.



WOODLAND WANDERINGS.

THROUGH the woods I wandered,
When a happy child,
Where the early blossoms
Bloomed in beauty wild.

There I sought the primrose,
There the bluebell found ;
There with wreaths of flowers
I my playmates crowned ;

There, with hearts unburdened,
Singing all day long,
We our voices mingled
With the wild bird's song.

Through the woods I wandered,
When a merry boy,
While the glades re-echoed
To my shouts of joy.

Seeking nuts or berries,
Eager roamed I there,
Mocked the hidden cuckoo,
Roused the startled hare ;

Or, some nest to plunder,
Climbed the topmost trees,
Swung upon their branches,
Swaying in the breeze.

Through the woods I wandered,
In the prime of youth,
To loved ears repeating
Words of heart-felt truth.

On our path descended
Sunbeams bright and fair ;
But her smile was brighter
Who was with me there.

Through the leaves unceasing
Passed a pleasant thrill ;
But the words she uttered
Sounded sweeter still.

Through the woods I wander,
Now to manhood grown ;
Early hopes and pleasures
Far away have flown ;

Fled the merry freshness
Of the new-born day ;
And the spring-tide flowers
Seem not half so gay ;

Gone the dear companions
Of my early choice ;
And all hushed the accents
Of that cherished voice.

Yet, when I re-visit
Each familiar spot,
Linked with treasured moments,
Ne'er to be forgot,

Dreams of days departed
Crowding come to me,
And the friends of childhood
Once again I see ;

Joys that long have slumbered
O'er my heart preside,
And that loved one rambles
Once more by my side.

Thus, like one who, trav'ling,
Weary and opprest,
At some wayside fountain
Finds relief and rest,

There I often linger,
While these visions last,
On the threshold standing
Of the happy past ;

By-gone scenes reviewing,
Ever fresh and green,
Till the pressing present
Draws a veil between.

Then, with lighter footsteps,
I the path explore
Where the unknown future
Stretches far before ;

Onward with me bearing
Tender thoughts and sweet ;
Treading all my sorrow
Underneath my feet :

Forth to do my duty,
And fulfil my part,
With fresh vigour going,
And a better heart.



EVENING.

'T WAS evening in the summer-time,
And in the summer's sweetest prime,
When the green woods all peaceful lie,
Unruffled glide the waters by,
And the low breathings of the air
The scent of dewy flowers bear,—

I climbed a lofty hill, whose shade
A spreading train around me made :
The summit gained, the sunset bright
Burst like a vision on my sight ;
While, rich in varied wood and field,
The lovely landscape lay revealed.

I saw the distant river gleam,
Sparkling beneath each brilliant beam ;
And watched the sun, descending slow,
Tow'rds the far hills in grandeur go,
And seem, as on their crest he lay,
The funeral pyre of the day.

Then, sinking gently down to rest,
He vanished from the golden west ;
While the last parting look he threw
Was rich with many a varied hue,
And the bright rays that shot on high
Made one great glory of the sky.

The fleece-like clouds that hung o'erhead
Their gentle wings above him spread,
And caught upon their plumage fair
The beauteous beams that mounted there ;
Like holy men, whose lives are bright
With rays of heav'n's reflected light.

It was as though some monarch great
Had passed in all the pomp of state,
With martial train and banners proud,
Before a wonder-stricken crowd,
And, through the portal wide and tall,
Entered some splendid palace-hall.

But soon o'er that enchanting scene,
So pure, so lovely, and serene,
There stole a dark and altered look,
While all around an aspect took
That seemed, amid the fading light,
The shadow of the coming night.

The sunset glory waned away,
And twilight gathered, drear and grey ;
While all the clouds, that lately shone
Like golden trappings of a throne,
Now grimly lowered over all,
Like folds of a funereal pall.

Wrapt in a mist the valley lay—
The hills hung dark—and scarce a ray

Lit up the dull and cheerless scene,
That late one blaze of light had been,
Save where some cottage taper bright
Broke through the growing gloom of night.

But suddenly there gleamed on high
Upon that dim and shadowy sky,
Over the western hills afar,
A brilliant, solitary star,
So clear and fair, 'twas like a gem
From some celestial diadem.

And, like a beacon-fire on shore,
That shines the waste of waters o'er,
By some benighted crew descried
When pilotless they roam the tide,
That star awoke within my heart
A joy that shall not soon depart.

Oh ! beauteous are the charms of morn,
When growing beams the hills adorn ;
And lovely is the noontide hour,
When all is full of life and pow'r :
But neither noon nor morning bears
So sweet a grace as evening wears.

And, like the Sabbath, which bestows
Upon the week a soothing close,
So to the day the evening brings
Repose and comfort on its wings,
And sheds on hearts by toil opprest
The heaven-born joys of peace and rest.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

"He that should hear, as I have, the clear airs of the nightingale, the sweet descants, the rising and falling of her voice, might well be lifted above the earth, and say, 'Lord, what music hast Thou provided for Thy saints in heaven, when Thou hast given bad men such music here on earth?'"—*Isaac Walton.*

I N gath'ring gloom around,
The daylight fades from view ;
And on the thirsty ground
Descends the welcome dew ;
While earth and air hail with delight
The gentle presence of the night.

The stars, with rays of gold,
Spangle the azure sky ;
Till, beauteous to behold,
Mounting in state on high,
The full-orbed moon, with brilliant beam,
Is mirrored in the crystal stream.

The flow'rs that deck the day
Their weary petals close ;
The birds their lightsome lay
Have hushed into repose ;
Whilst slumber seems all else to bind
Save babbling brook and whisp'ring wind.

But, hark ! a voice I hear
From yonder thicket swell,
So pure, so calm, so clear,
It seems to cast a spell,

Surpassing strong, and yet so light,
O'er sleeping earth and heavens bright.

With ripple light and low,
Doth the swift brook rejoice ;
Unwearied is its flow,
And merry is its voice :
But happier glides the strain along
Of that unhesitating song.

Over the meadow-grass,
And underneath the trees,
With rustle soft, doth pass
The newly-wakened breeze :
But sweeter on the ear there floats
The sound of those melodious notes.

Mysterious bird of night,
Thou hidden fount of joy,
What sources of delight
Thy ceaseless tongue employ ?
Thou seemest, with thy music grand,
Some spirit of the better land.

Oh ! welcome is to me
The song of ev'ry bird :
But none compares with thee
Of all I ever heard ;
And more than all thy strain I love,
Thou minstrel of the slumb'ring grove.

THE ROBIN.

WHEN some heavy storm of winter
Passes from the darkened sky,
And the clouds in broken masses
Fast across the heavens fly ;

When some fitful gleam of sunshine
Breaks the gloom that hangs around,
While the droppings of the shower
Patter thickly to the ground ;

Often have I heard a robin,
Perched upon some lofty tree,
Pour, in outbreak loud and sudden,
Strains of sweetest melody.

Like some heaven-inspired singer,
In an hour of dark despair,
Soothing with his holy music
Hearts oppressed with pain and care ;

Like some hopeful, fleet forerunner
Of the joys of coming spring.—
Oh ! I cannot but be happy
When I hear the robin sing.

Many a bird that all the summer
Carolled gaily every day,
At the first approach of winter,
Flies to warmer lands away.

But not thus the faithful robin :

Winter, with its snow-drift white,
Draws him nearer to our houses,
Makes him dearer to our sight.

Other birds, when all is pleasant,

Sing the leaves and flowers among ;
But, when leaves and flowers are withered,
Hush the music of their song.

But not so this merry minstrel :

Though in summer seldom heard,
In the dreary days of winter
All his soul to speech is stirred.

Thanks to thee, thou cheerful robin,

For the lesson thou dost give !
May I, with a grateful spirit,
Learn from thee the way to live !

Thus, when fast around is fading

All that once was fresh and fair,
When misfortune gathers o'er me,
And the heavy gloom of care ;

Still, in patient hope abiding, •

May I watch the tempest fall,
And, like thee, when dark days lower,
Boldly meet and face them all !

And, like thee, though silent often

When the gay and merry sing,
While the happy fields of summer
With their tuneful voices ring ;

Yet, when winter winds are wailing,
And the days are short and drear,
Then to cheer the hearts of others,
May my song be loud and clear !



THE EVENING STAR.

HAIL ! thou star of evening,
Far more bright to me
Than the noontide's glory,
Welcome though it be !
Thou, the first-born beauty
Of the starry height,
Sentinel of heaven,
First-lit lamp of night !

Fair is morning's planet,
Heralding the dawn,
Melting in the sunbeams,
When the night is gone :
But the star of evening
Is to me more dear,
Like hope's beacon, gleaming
When the gloom is near.

When the summer sunset
Softly fades and dies,
And the night-clouds gather
Over golden skies,
Through the spreading shadows
Breaks thy cheering light,
And, as night grows darker,
Grows more clear and bright.

When the storms of winter
Lower in the west,
And the sun enshrouded
Hurries to his rest,
Through the rising tempest
Peers thy peaceful ray,
Like the soaring spirit
Of the vanished day.

Oh ! when clouds of sorrow
Gather o'er my soul,
And the storms of trouble
Round about me roll,
May some holy comfort
On my pathway shine
From the skies above me,
Sweet and pure as thine !

And, when death's dark valley
I at length shall tread,
And its unknown terrors
Thicken round my head,
Then, through doubt and darkness,
On my dying brow,
May a light from heaven
Beam as bright as thou !



THE MORNING STAR.

WELCOME, star of morning,
Herald of delight !
Publishing the tidings
Of departing night,
O'er the distant mountains
Beaming brightly down,
Like some priceless jewel
In a monarch's crown !

All the host of heaven
Hide their dazzled face,
Ere the day's great ruler
Rises to his place ;
Thou alone remainest
Till the gloom is past,
Watch and ward still keeping,
Faithful to the last.

When the rosy splendour
Of the summer dawn
Wakes the early shadows
On the dewy lawn,
Thy clear, crystal radiance
Fades before the eye,
Like the rainbow, melting
In the bright'ning sky.

When the winter morning,
Dark with storm and cloud,
Draws the folds asunder
Of its misty shroud,
Brilliantly thou gleamest
On the gladdened sight,
Like the flaming banner
Of the march of light.

Oh ! be this the lesson
I may learn from thee,—
At the post of duty
Constant still to be,
To none other yielding
Till my task is done,
Straight my course pursuing
Till the goal is won !

And, though long and weary
Earth's dark night appear,
May the hope of heaven
Shine undimmed and clear,
Till the day of promise
Break in glories bright,
And faith, long expectant,
Lose itself in sight !



A QUIET PLACE.*

THERE'S a quiet place where I often go,
When the sun is in the west,
And the evening breezes, as they blow
O'er the trees above and the lake below,
Seem sighing themselves to rest ;

Where under the bank beneath the feet
There lies a hidden well ;
Where the hanging boughs the waters meet,
And the moor-hen finds a safe retreat,
And the swan delights to dwell.

For there have I heard the cuckoo's call,
And the lay of the nightingale,
The cooing of doves in the tree-tops tall,
And the distant sound of the waterfall
Come creeping up the vale.

And in the far-off haze I have seen
The slopes of the circling hill,
And, the arching boughs of the trees between,
The broad expanse of the meadows green
Lie peacefully and still.

I have seen the water smooth as glass,
Or the ripples o'er it fleet,
When the winds that move it, as they pass,
Bear the scent of dew-besprinkled grass
And the odour of flowers sweet.

* The spot here referred to is Mongewell, near Wallingford, the seat of my kind patron, Mr. Geo. H. Brettle.

I have watched the shades of twilight glide
Over the peaceful scene,
Till the stars stole forth on the heavens wide,
And the moonbeams fell on the tranquil tide
In streams of silver sheen.

Oh ! there is no vale I ever knew
That has such charms for me,
Where the earth assumes a brighter hue,
And the sky seems tinged with a deeper blue,
And the flowers more fair to see.

And still contented shall be my lot,
Whether I laugh or weep,
If, the busy cares of the world forgot,
I may visit that sweet, secluded spot,
Where the woods and waters sleep.



"THE GRASS OF THE FIELD."

WHEN at morn I walked the meadows,
Tall and thick the grass had sprung ;
Honey-seeking bees flew round it ;
High o'erhead the gay lark sung ;
While upon its nodding flowers
Many a glistening dew-drop hung.

Then I thought of hopes long cherished,
When my heart was young and light,
Works begun with brilliant promise,
When the morn of life was bright,
And the landscape of the future
Stretched before my raptured sight.

But I passed again at noontide—
Sadly changed was then the scene,
For the grass lay dry and withered
Which at morn was fresh and green,
While dead leaves were scattered round me
Where the blooming flowers had been.

And with saddened heart I pondered
O'er life's ever-changeful day ;
How my deeds in naught had ended ;
How my hopes had flown away ;
How at morn they proudly blossomed,
And at noon they withered lay.

Yet I went once more at evening,
After sunset bright and fair,
When the twilight shades were gath'ring,
And the dews had fallen there—
And the new-mown hay's sweet odour
Scented every breath of air.

Then I deemed myself contented
That my works should early meet
Such a sad and sudden ending
As the grass beneath my feet,
If to those who follow after
They in death but seem as sweet.



LONG AGO.

"The days that are no more."—*Tennyson*.

I AM thinking of the days of long ago,
Till they rise once again before my sight,
And my tears with the dark and weary flow,
And I laugh with the merry and the bright.
There are some I am glad to reckon gone ;
There are some that are better far at rest ;
But some are so sweet to think upon
That even their memory is blest.

I am thinking of the friends of long ago,
Of the true, and the trusty, and the tried,
Whom still 'tis my happiness to know,
Though now they are no longer by my side :
For, though distant be the day when last we met,
And even death itself our pathway part,
Their faces seem to smile upon me yet,
And their voices echo deeply in my heart.

I am thinking of the joys of long ago,
How they shone o'er each sad and lonely spot,
Till the darkest way with hopefulness would glow,
And mercy came to cheer the hardest lot.
There are some that have never known decay ;
There are some that still linger in my mind ;
And, though some like the flowers fell away,
They have left a golden harvest-time behind.

I am thinking of the griefs of long ago,
Of the trials and the sorrows that are fled,
How some came with quick and sudden blow,
And others hovered slowly overhead ;
Yet how, when thicker trouble seemed my doom,
And my heart underneath the burden bowed,
The sun broke in splendour through the gloom,
And cast the bow of promise on the cloud.

I am thinking of the hopes of long ago,
How they spoke peace and comfort to my soul,
And bade me with courage forward go
And struggle bravely onward to the goal.
There are some that no future may fulfil ;
There are some that are buried in the past ;
But some there are burning brightly still,
That will burn but the brighter to the last.



THE SOLITARY VIOLET.

IN a lonely place a violet grew,
Deep hidden in a wood ;
And all alone it budded and blew,
Unheeded around its fragrance threw,
In secret solitude.

The winds that through the woodland ride
Lightly lingered there ;
And the gentle dews of eventide
Spread its sweetness far and wide
Upon the freshened air.

But the violet hung its lovely head,
Weary with its lot ;
For unknown to man its scent was shed,
And as yet no sound of human tread
Had waked the quiet spot.

Till, bidding all around farewell,
It heaved one parting sigh ;
And, though the sunbeams softly fell,
And the breezes whispered through the dell,
It laid it down to die.

But, just as the violet breathed its last,
And drooped its head in death,
A wanderer that way there passed,
And he caught the odour upward cast
From the flower's dying breath.

He wore the look of one opprest
With sorrow and with care ;
For, with sad brow and aching breast,
He roamed about in search of rest,
Nor found it anywhere.

But, with that flow'ret's scent, there seems
Back on his thoughts to roll
The light of childhood's happy dreams ;
And hope once more unclouded beams
Upon his troubled soul.

The faded bloom of that violet fair
Away with him he bore,
And, with a heart unstained with care,
Freed from the trammels of despair,
Cherished it evermore.



SHADOWS ON THE HILL.

BEYOND the valley that expands
In unobtrusive beauty bright,
A hill in lonely grandeur stands,
And bounds the limit of the sight,
Like some old fort, whose walls maintain
A guard upon the peaceful plain.

And, when my grateful eye surveys
The charms that in the vale I find,
That height arrests my wand'ring gaze,
And moulds the thoughts within my mind ;
And oft its varied form I trace,
Like lines upon some well-known face.

Thus looking forth one summer day,
When fiercely shone the sun on high,
And scarce a cloud was seen to stray
Across the desert of the sky,
The hill appeared all brown and bare,
Reflecting bright the noon-day glare.

But when at eve again I went
To visit that familiar scene,
With eager eye and mind intent,
I watched, where late no shade had been,
The creeping footsteps, soft and still,
Of evening shadows on the hill.

And often in my heart I see
Such changes as these slopes reveal :
And thus, when noon shines brilliantly,
Its light serves only to conceal
The thoughts that from the glare of day
My secret spirit hides away.

But when the sun sinks in the west,
And level throws his parting beam,
These thoughts arise within my breast,
And, like some past-recalling dream,
My heart with pleasing sadness fill,
Like evening shadows on the hill.



DREAMS.

DREAMS, childhood's dreams !
Happy, and pure, and bright,
As the sun's first glittering beams
When they burst upon the sight !
And the freshness of morn may depart
In the glare of the growing day ;
But the joy that it gave to the childish heart
Nothing can take away.

Dreams, youthful dreams !
Beautiful, fair, and sweet,
As the dew of the morning seems
When it sparkles under our feet !
And the morning dew may be dispersed
By the sun's increasing glow ;
But the tender touch that it gave at first
Will linger long below.

Dreams, manhood's dreams !
Hopeful, and deep, and strong,
As the chief of a thousand streams,
When it rolls in its might along !
But the river as onward it flows,
Comes at last to the wide-spread sea ;
And the dreams of man and time must close
In the dawn of eternity.

Dreams, age's dreams !

Peaceful, and calm, and clear,
As the star of the evening gleams,
When the shades of the night are near !
But the light of the evening star
Cheers most as it sinks in the west ;
And the dreams of age are sweeter far
When they speak to the soul of rest.



REST.

REST for the labourer, rest !
When the daylight slowly dies,
When the shadows creep, and welcome sleep
Comes to the weary eyes.

Rest for the watcher, rest !
When the longed-for dawning breaks,
When the gloom of night is put to flight,
As the day's great splendour wakes.

Rest for the mariner, rest !
Beyond the angry tide,
The anchor's cast in the port at last,
His native shore beside.

Rest for the soldier, rest !
When the storms of battle cease,
When the din of war is heard no more,
And the people dwell in peace.

Rest for the traveller, rest !
The day's long journey done,
When, after the tramp, they pitch the camp
Beneath the setting sun.

Rest for the mourner, rest !
When the first wild grief subsides,
As from the heart dark doubts depart,
And the peace of God abides.

Rest for the wanderer, rest !
No more afar to roam,
When welcomed back from his wayward track
Into his long-lost home.

Rest for the Christian, rest !
When the struggle of life is o'er,
When the race is run, and the crown is won,
Rest ! and for evermore.



THE LITTLE HAND.

A LOVE STORY.

AS strolling in a quiet country place,
The path leads onward through a stile,
Arrayed in womanhood's first blushing grace,
Admired by all, she stops awhile :
With proffered help, obsequious courtiers stand ;
Distrustful he draws back alone ;
But past them all reaches a little hand,
That fondly, firmly clasps his own.

In after years, among the young and gay,
He moves, the favourite of all ;
Bright eyes beam tenderly upon his way,
And pleasant voices on him call :
But, 'mid the fair and fascinating band,
And the allurements round him thrown,
He sees, more welcome still, a little hand,
That fondly, firmly clasps his own.

Now thickening ills around him gather fast,
And friends forsake and foes oppress,
While, every joy by sorrow overcast,
He wanders on in loneliness :
Yet, though of care his forehead bears the brand,
Though dark and drear his path has grown,
He feels, through all his woe, a little hand,
That fondly, firmly clasps his own.

But see ! at length the clouds above him part,
The light of heaven dawns once more ;
The ills that hung so heavy on his heart
Forgotten seem as soon as o'er :
As comes a storm-tost mariner to land,
He comes, his toils and troubles flown ;
Before the world is stretched a little hand,
That fondly, firmly clasps his own.



THE TOUCH OF MEMORY.

I NEVER watch the evening star
Beam forth upon the dying day,
But what my heart is carried far
To happy scenes now passed away.

I never scent the new-mown hay,
When evening dew upon it fall,
But many a sweet though distant day
My mind responsive will recall.

I never hear the church-bell chimes
Peal out upon the Sabbath air,
But thoughts arise of by-gone times,
And all the joys that flourished there.

Thus many chords of love, that lie
All silent in those hearts of ours,
To memory's tender touch reply,
Regaining all their former pow'rs.

And, at that touch awakening fast,
Though long forgotten and unheard,
The thoughts and feelings of the past
To life and speech once more are stirred.

As some lone harp, that long hath lain
To song untuned, to music still,
When roused by human hands again,
Feels all its inmost spirit thrill :

Neglected and untouched no more,
No more stern silence round it clings ;
Its voice sounds tuneful as of yore,
And music swells its trembling strings.



THE STORM.

A BLINDING mist upon the whirlwind rides,
Mingled of heaven's rain and ocean's spray,
And sea and sky behind its curtain hides,
Save when the lurid gleam of dying day
Breaks through the gathering storm its sudden way,
Glancing upon the sea-gull's snowy plume,
Or on some struggling vessel far away,
Tinging with deeper dye the clouds that loom
Around on every side, one canopy of gloom.

Now all the surface of the angry deep
Rises in foam-topped ridges, huge and tall,
The wild, ungovernable waves, that leap
Like caged wild beasts against the cliff's high wall,
Struggling to burst their bounds, but, baffled all,
Sinking with sullen and sepulchral roar,
Back to their ocean bed in torrents fall,
Then gather up their strength to rise once more,
And break with thundering sound upon the rock-strewn
shore.



THE CALM.

WITH never-ending movement, strong, but light,
The mighty ocean heaves its massive breast,
As though, the morning after some fierce fight,
There lay a giant warrior at rest.
The pebbly beach, with tangled seaweed drest,
Stretches its glistening strand in one wide sweep,
As the long wave lifts up its curling crest,
Then falls and breaks, far up the shore to creep,
With pleasant, murmuring music, ceaseless, clear, and deep.

The heavens above, bright, beautiful, and blue,
With here and there a fleecy cloud, appear ;
The sea beneath rivals the sky in hue,
Far as the eye can range serene and clear.
The gallant ships their stately progress steer,
And to the sun their gleaming sails display ;
And, o'er the heaving waters skimming near,
The wild sea-birds pursue their morning prey ;
While sun-lit ripples dance upon the peaceful bay.



FADED FLOWERS.

PALE and scentless, dry and crumbled,
Though with care bestowed away ;
To the dust your beauty humbled,
Like the dreams of yesterday,
Which, like you, were lately blowing
In their prime,
Joy and sweetness round them throwing
All their time.

But, though withered now I find you,
Shorn of all your former grace,
You have left a joy behind you
That no change can e'er efface :
In my heart you still are living
As of yore,
There your scent and beauty giving
Evermore.



THE RIVER THAMES.

CLEAR, calm, and peaceful, noiseless, still, and deep,
Save when the cloud-cast shadows o'er them sweep,
Or glistening ripples in the sunshine leap,
Onward the gentle waters slowly creep,
Beneath some hill, thick-wooded, high, and steep,
Beside some ivy-covered, ruined heap,
Where frowned of yore the battlemented keep,
Or lone churchyard, where generations sleep ;
Through meadows green, dotted with kine and sheep,
Or harvest-fields, where busy labourers reap ;
By banks o'er which the hanging willows weep,
While through the distant bridge thick-clustered houses
peep.



THE RAIN.

THE earth lies bare beneath the sun,
The thirsty flow'rs droop one by one,
And dry the parched-up brook hath run.

Down falls the blessing of the rain,
The brook revived flows on amain,
And the flow'rs raise their heads again.

So oft the heart of man doth lie,
Languished the hopes that once were high,
And every spring within it dry.

The welcome show'rs refreshing pour,
Its pulse beats happy as before,
And up to heav'n it looks once more.



PASSING SHIPS.

HOW oft from out the distance blue
Some stately ship sweeps o'er the bay,
There for a space remains in view,
Then from the waters fades away.

Thus oft upon life's ocean wide
Faces arise awhile to light,
Across our path in silence glide,
And pass for ever from the sight.



THE PATHWAY THROUGH THE WOOD.

A SONG.

'T WAS a calm and lovely evening,
And the peaceful woods were still :
Scarce a sound of life ascended
The forest-covered hill,
As beneath the welcome shelter
Of the shady trees I stood,
While before my view there wended
The pathway through the wood.

On either side, like columns,
The beeches reared their head,
And their slender branches hovered,
Like angel wings outspread ;
While the sunbeams fell between them,
Gently softened and subdued,
And formed a chequered carpet
For the pathway through the wood.

The turf that lay beneath me
Was dressed in living green,
And the brightest flowers of summer
Were scattered o'er the scene :
But, of all I saw around me,
I deemed most fair and good
One who by my side was standing
In the pathway through the wood.

And, while that best-belov'd one
Was ling'ring with me there,
In my heart the hope I cherished
She my path through life would share ;
And, with her for my companion,
'Tis my only wish it should
Prove as peaceful and as happy
As the pathway through the wood.



THOUGHTS OF THE DEAR OLD TIMES.

A SONG.

'MID all the joys that hope can boast,
Or expectation give,
One joy there is that charms me most,
Through every hour I live ;
For, floating on my memory,
Like sound of distant chimes,
Come thoughts of moments sweet to me,
Thoughts of the dear old times.

'Tis this that bids despair depart,
And drives our griefs away ;
'Tis this that cheers the saddest heart,
And gilds the brightest day ;
'Tis this that sweetens music's strain,
Inspires the poet's rhymes,
And brings a blessing in its train—
Thoughts of the dear old times.

Still to these thoughts my spirit clings,
Where'er my lot is cast ;
And the fairest scene the future brings
Shall but rebuild the past :
For, though the days to come be drear,
And I in foreign climes,
One joy my darkest hour shall cheer,
Thoughts of the dear old times.

MY DEAR OLD HOME.

A SONG.

MY dear old home ! how oft to thee
My thoughts go back with joy,
Until thy roof I seem to see,
Once more a happy boy :
My mother's kiss is on my brow,
My father's hand in mine ;
My long-lost playmates even now
Their arms around me twine.

Though future years to me should bring
Unbounded wealth and pow'r,
And fortune on my pathway fling
Her bounties every hour,
My dear old home ! within thy walls
I'd rather make my stay
Than in a monarch's gilded halls
Hold undisputed sway.

How dear to me shall ever prove
That one familiar spot,
Blest by a thousand dreams of love
That ne'er can be forgot !
For, though to thee I ne'er return,
But far for ever roam,
My heart with tender thoughts shall yearn
To thee, my dear old home !

OLD ENGLAND.

"Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
If England to itself do rest but true."—*Shakespeare.*

OLD England ! thou mother of nations,
Renowned in the annals of fame,
What proud and ennobling sensations
Awake to the sound of thy name !
How dear to thy sons and thy daughters
That one little isle of the sea,
Begirt by a bulwark of waters,
The birthplace and grave of the free !

How oft to the exile, when driven
Afar from his country to roam,
Thy shores, ever open, have given
A bountiful refuge and home !
How often the helpless and tearful
Thy strength have exulted to see,
And the hearts of the fainting and fearful
Have gathered fresh courage from thee !

How oft in thy heart-stirring story
Thy sons in the thick of the fight,
By deeds of unparalleled glory,
Have rendered their memory bright !

But when, ever willing and speedy,
Their world-rousing voice they uprear
In the cause of the wretched and needy,
How nobler by far they appear !

Yet 'tis not the battle-field only
Their fairest renown has obtained ;
But conflicts unheeded and lonely
For them deathless honour have gained :
For, when duty's summons demanded
Themselves to her service to yield,
They entered the fight single-handed,
And fell ere they quitted the field.

It is this that has ever surrounded
Thy course with a halo of light ;
'Tis on this that thy greatness is grounded—
Devotion to duty and right :
For the cause that such heroes can waken
Can never by might be repelled,
By adversity's hand may be shaken,
But never by tyranny quelled.

Oh ! long may old England thus flourish,
O'er the cause of the truth to preside,
The growth of real freedom to nourish,
And scatter its seed far and wide !
Long, long may she gather around her
The wisest and best of the world ;
And, though age with high honour has crowned
her,
Yet still be her banner unfurled !

May all that is noble flock thither ;
May all that is good there increase ;
And the strength of our sov'reignty wither
Ere the life of our liberty cease !
May England, the first of the nations,
The truth's mighty treasure maintain,
Handing down to her last generations
Her freedom untouched by a stain !



OIL ON THE TROUBLED WATERS.

(Written on the eve of the General Election of 1868.)

THE wind may sway the forest,
Or over the mountain sweep,
Driving the clouds before it,
Lashing the mighty deep :
But it's under the hill-side shelter
That the warmest sunbeams glow,
And it's down in the peaceful valley
That the fairest flowers blow.

Deeply may run the river,
And brightly its waters gleam ;
And the waves may leap upon it,
While swiftly flows its stream :
But it's under the hanging willows,
With scarce a ripple nigh,
Far from the struggling current,
That the lovely lilies lie.

So 'tis not in the times of tumult
That the wisest works are wrought,
Nor in the troubled spirit
That we find the purest thought :
But 'tis from our humbler duties
That the brightest joys are won,
And in our quiet moments
That the greatest good is done.

Not that we should not differ,
When duty calls us to,
Or strive the wrong to vanquish,
Or strive the right to do :
But that we should be trying
To compass peaceful ends,
And tighten those bonds together
That make us firmer friends.

And as o'er the face of heaven
Conflicting winds may blow,
And, over the meadows scattered,
Different plants may grow ;
Yet not one of all the number
But a common source has found,
And there's one blue sky above us,
And one green earth around :—

So, although in life's wide struggle
In ranks opposed we stand,
And though diverse companions
Are found on either hand ;
Yet will we all endeavour
As friends to meet and part,
And, however our thoughts may differ,
We'll yet be one in heart.



. IN THE STREETS OF LONDON.

. THERE'S a voice that I hear crying,
- Crying in the street,
High amid the roar of traffic
And the rush of feet.

There's a voice that I hear crying,
Crying in the street,
When above the sleeping city
Night and morning meet.

'Tis a voice of solemn warning,
Mighty, clear, and loud,
Rising far above the tumult
Of the busy crowd.

'Tis a voice of supplication
And of deep distress,
That no tongue can ever utter
And no words express.

'Tis a voice by lips unspoken,
And by ears unheard ;
But no less distinct the meaning
Of each burning word.

'Tis the voice of vice's victims
And privation's slaves,
And it cries aloud for pity,
And for help it craves.

From the pale and care-worn features,
Want's accustomed seat ;
From the torn and tattered garments,
And the weary feet ;

From the lines of youth and beauty
In some lovely face,
Where pure heart and better motive
Still have left their trace ;

From the helpless, hopeless outcast,
Sounds the bitter cry,
While the world to toil or pleasure
Passes careless by.

Oh ! thou great and mighty city,
Great in wealth and pow'r !
Hearest thou that cry of anguish,
Calling every hour ?

Naught are all thy wealth and greatness,
Naught but empty show,
If that voice of want and sorrow
Long unheeded go.

In thine ears 'tis ever calling
From its depths of pain ;
And God grant its cry of anguish
May not sound in vain !

A PLEA FOR EARLY CLOSING.

(What the Young Men and Women said to their Employers.

HOT and dusty has the day been—cool and fresh is
evening now,
And the soothing scent of flowers floats on all the winds
that blow.

Through the day's long hours we've laboured, in the close
and noisy town :

We would see the fields and meadows ere the sinking sun
goes down.

We long to wander through the woodland, underneath the
pleasant trees,

To climb the hills, and breathe once more the pure and
health-renewing breeze ;

To gaze upon the golden glory of the slowly setting sun,
And watch the stars come twinkling forth upon the
heavens one by one.

They say in wood and meadow green the flowers are
blooming fair,

And that the merry song of birds is sounding everywhere ;
That the air along the river-side is blowing soft and cool,
And that the snow-white lilies float in many a quiet pool.

They say that all around is naught but joy and loveliness,
And that the earth looks beautiful decked in her summer
dress ;

That the fields are tinged with brightest green, the
 heavens with deepest blue,
And that the new-mown hay smells sweet beneath the
 falling dew.

There's many a sport to tempt us, too, into the open air,
And many a friend that would be glad to ramble with us
 there.

We only ask to leave our work before the day is done,
And taste the pleasures that were meant to be denied to
 none.

'Tis not that we are idle ; for we all would strive our best
To work the harder with the strength won from these
 hours of rest ;
And, while our gain would be so great, your loss would
 be but small,
And the thanks of many a grateful heart would far out-
 balance all.



THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

THE Old Year rises up from his seat,
And his heart beats sad and slow :
His hair is white with length of days,
And his head is hanging low,
As he moves to the door with tottering feet,
For he knows that he must go.

The New Year comes with a buoyant step,
That scarcely treads the ground :
His limbs are light, and his merry laugh
Re-echoes far around,
As he greets the threshold of his realm,
And clears it at a bound.

The Old Year bears many joys away
That once we counted dear ;
And faces that we loved to see
Are now no longer near ;
While hopes that stirred our inmost soul
Lie in the grave of the year.

But the New Year's time is yet to come—
His tale is yet to be told—
So we'll trustfully wait the scenes he'll show
And the treasures he'll unfold ;
For it may be the joys the New Year brings
Will fulfil the hopes of the Old.

Then the Old Year gives but a sad account
Of the race that has been run,
Of hearts that fainted in the fight
Ere it was half begun,
Of wrong triumphant over right,
And duty left undone.

But the New Year's record is white and clean,
Unstained by sorrow or sin :
He bears a prize for all to seek,
And laurels for all to win,
A time for the weakest to strive once more,
And a time for the worst to begin.

Then we'll lay the Old Year gently down,
As a comrade true and tried ;
And the wrongs and errors of the past
We'll bury at his side ;
But the good that he has left behind
Deep in our hearts we'll hide.

And we'll grasp the New Year by the hand,
When the Old is gone to rest :
We'll greet him as a longed-for friend,
And as a welcome guest ;
And we'll make his stay a happy one,
And use it for the best.



“A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR.”

THERE'S an old and time-worn custom,
Old yet ever new,
That our fathers loved to honour,
And we will honour too ;
Which bids us every winter,
When the old year's end is near,
Wish to all “A Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year.”

When the days are dark and dreary,
When the nights are chill,
And the keen and rushing tempest
Whistles down the hill,
What happy faces gather
Round the cheerful fireside,
And greet each other's well-known looks,
At the welcome Christmas-tide !

How many hearts must gladden,
When the bright days come
That call them from their weary toil
To catch a glimpse of home !
And how many poor and suff'ring ones
Must hold the season dear,
And wish it could be Christmas-time
Throughout the live-long year !

The year is flying from us—
Soon it will be past—
And, with his many memories,
Our old friend's dying fast.
Then let no thoughts of anger
Survive his coming death ;
But words of love and kindness
Sweeten his latest breath :

While from our hearts we'll banish
All that will not tend
To guide his failing footsteps
To a calm and peaceful end ;
And, as we grasp each other's hand,
Each other's heart we'll cheer,
Wishing all " A Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year."



THE NEW YEAR'S BELLS.

HARK ! 'tis the sudden shout of busy bells,
On the still slumber of the midnight breaking,
As, borne upon the winter wind, it tells
A new year's waking.

High o'er the house-tops of the sleeping town,
Hurry their voices with uproarious pealing ;
Or through some solitary valley down
Come softly stealing.

Now wide around their merry notes they fling,
In all the ecstasy of new-born gladness ;
And now with melancholy numbers sing,
In soothing sadness.

Ye welcome bells that welcome in the year,
What though your sound be not an unmixed pleasure ?
Far distant be the day that will not hear
Your tuneful measure !



THE ATLANTIC CABLE.*

BENEATH the heaving breast
Of troubled ocean,
Where the deep waters rest
Free from commotion ;
Amid its unknown caves,
With many a wonder stored,
Far, far below the waves,
There lies a slender cord.

Under the broad, blue sea,
While ebbs and flows the tide,
And o'er its billows free
The fleets of nations ride ;
Through the dark wat'ry mine,
Swift as the lightnings run,
Words flash along the line
That links two worlds in one.

All honour to the men
Who thus have spanned the main,
And strove with courage when
Their efforts seemed in vain ;
By whose unwearied zeal,
The sea no longer parts
The sympathies that dwell
In two great peoples' hearts !

* These lines were written to commemorate the successful expedition of 1866, and were composed before the cable of 1865 had been recovered from the ocean bed and completed.

Oh, may this cable bear
 No harsh or angry word ;
But may its language e'er
 In friendship's cause be heard,
To teach all human-kind
 To love each other,
And in one union bind
 Brother to brother !



THE SHOWER OF STARS,*

14th NOVEMBER 1866.

DEEP in the dead of night,
While stretched the cloudless vault of heaven
on high,
The stars, in sudden streaks of flashing light,
Shot through the startled sky.

As if at one command,
The shining host in showers fell thick and fast,
Like seeds of fire from some great sower's hand
O'er fields of azure cast.

Many a brilliant flush
Marked the quick passage of each falling star,
Like sparks struck forth beneath the rapid rush
Of an archangel's car.

It seemed as we could trace
The Great King's progress up some heavenly street
As each observant star fell on its face
To bow before His feet.

* This mighty phenomenon of nature must be fresh in the memory of my readers. From midnight of the 13th of November till past two o'clock on the morning of the 14th the heavens were continuously covered with falling stars, which appeared in almost incalculable numbers.

THE MONARCHS OF THE NILE.

(RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO SIR SAMUEL WHITE AND
LADY BAKER.)

THE wondrous tale is told,
The mighty task is done ;
For gallant hearts and bold
The distant goal have won,
Which, centuries ago,
Whole legions sought in vain,
Which sages sighed to know,
And princes strove to gain.

To him, whose master mind
Planned and pursued a way
The far-off source to find,
A worthy tribute pay ;
Who, though foes gathered fast,
And seemed his path to fill,
Yet struggled to the last,
With firm, undaunted will.

And doubly honour her,
His consort in the fight,
Whom doubt could not deter,
Whom danger could not fright ;
Who bravely played her part,
The weary journey's length,
With woman's constant heart
And more than woman's strength.

Then place two noble names
On Britain's scroll of worth,
The land that proudly claims *
The honour of their birth ;
And crown their well-fought strife
With fortune's fairest smile,
Crown Baker and his wife
The monarchs of the Nile !

* Since writing the above, I have been told that Lady Baker is not of British birth. All I can say is, if she is not, she deserves to be.



ENGLAND TO IRELAND,

APRIL, 1868.

(WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT OF THE PRINCE
AND PRINCESS OF WALES TO IRELAND.)

TO the green isle of Erin the Saxon prince came ;
And warm was the welcome that met him,
And joyful the lips that re-echoed his name
From hearts that will not soon forget him.

And the looks of his consort were lovely and sweet,
And hearty the tribute they paid her,
While many proud spirits lay low at the feet
Of the beautiful Danish invader.

Oh ! falsely the foes of fair Erin declare
She is faithless to all that is royal ;
For the hearts that complain of the burdens they bear
Are none the less honest and loyal.

And in vain on old England the blame shall they cast
Of ne'er heeding her sister isle's sorrow ;
For fain would we wipe out the stains of the past,
And hasten a happier morrow.

Sweet Erin ! may quarrels divide us no more ;
No more may our spirits obey them ;
But the ocean that rolls on each weather-worn shore
Serve but as a grave where to lay them !

Oh ! true be our friendship—long, long may it stand—
And bright be the prospect before it :
Be it firm as the rocks that encircle thy land,
And green as the turf that grows o'er it !



A WELCOME TO LONGFELLOW.

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE POET'S VISIT TO ENGLAND
IN 1868.)

WITH hearty looks and outstretched hands,
And words of welcome sweet,
Old England on her threshold stands,
Columbia's bard to greet,—
And hails, as does a loving mother, one
Whom she is proud to reckon as her son.

What though long years have passed away
Since first thy fathers sailed
Where, on that shore far distant, they
A home of refuge hailed?
Still, as they stood, to-day their children stand,
To own with us one tongue and fatherland.

What though the wide-spread ocean rolls
Betwixt our home and thine?
The ties that circle kindred souls
Around us fast entwine;
And in our ears have echoed loud and long
The stirring accents of thy noble song.

We do not ask what high degree
The wise on thee bestow:
The honest truths we've learnt of thee
Are all we care to know.

His words can never want a winning grace
Whose heart, like thine, is in its proper place.

Wherever sorrow's tears are shed,
Or misery is near,
Or dark despair bends down the head,
Thy verse prevails to cheer ;
And on the weary soul, like summer rain,
Gently descends thy soft and soothing strain.

Poet ! to thee we give our hand,
For thou hast won our heart.
Up thick around thee through our land
May warmest greetings start ;
And may a welcome sound from every tongue,
Where'er thy rhymes are read or songs are sung !



HYMN,

SUNG BY THE READING PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY, ACCOMPANIED
BY THE BAND OF THE GRENADIER GUARDS, AT THE CEREMONY
OF LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE
READING GRAMMAR SCHOOL BY H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF
WALES, 1ST JULY, 1870.

Tune, "Gotha" (H.R.H. the late Prince Consort).

O LORD, to Thee our prayer addressing,
We, here assembled, humbly ask
That Thou wilt grant Thy fruitful blessing,
Henceforth to rest upon our task.

Throughout this work, Thy care extending
With ever-watchful eye look down ;
Its progress, from all harm defending,
With Thine almighty favour crown.

Upon this spot both sow and nourish,
Within the heart of early youth,
The seed of learning that shall flourish
In harvest-fields of golden truth.

May they, to manhood's years attaining,
Their country's welfare keep in view ;
Her virtue and her right maintaining,
In distant days her fame renew.

Be it their best, their sole endeavour
Thy will to do, Thy way to love ;
Till all their labours end for ever,
Within Thy realm of rest above.

HASTE TO THE RESCUE.

A PLEA FOR THE NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR AID TO THE SICK
AND WOUNDED IN WAR.

SEE ! the demon of the battle
Hovers o'er his human prey,
As the nations, hot with passion,
Gather to the deadly fray !
Hark ! the rifle's rapid volley
And the cannon's growing roar
Tell abroad the horrid tidings
Of the cruel curse of war !

Look how fast the ranks are thinning,
As the conflict spreads around,
And how thick the dead and wounded
Lie upon the shot-torn ground !
Listen how, above the tumult
Of the victor's shouting train,
From a thousand lips to heaven
Goes the bitter cry of pain !

Oh, ye sons of happy England,
In your peace-crowned isle secure !
Think upon the heavy burdens
That your fellow-men endure :
Let your honest hearts be open,
Reach the ready helping hand ;
For the succour of the needy
Take at once your willing stand !

While, amid his ghastly harvest,
Death is binding up his sheaves
Let us glean into our garner
All the busy reaper leaves :
Thus, to aid the sick and wounded
In the sight of God and man
Work a nobler deed of conquest
Than the proudest ruler can !



TO THE READER.

A FAREWELL.

READER, if you should say,
When you have read my book,
"I bear some thoughts away
That from its leaves I took ;"
you have with my song
One pleasant moment spent,
Which you may think of long,
Then am I well content.

I do not seek for fame,
The many-tongued and proud,
To hear my humble name
Repeated long and loud ;
From learned lips to gain
Words of well-measured praise,
Or see my verse sustain
The criticising gaze.—

To smooth the lines away
Upon the brow of care,
The pangs of grief allay,
And drive away despair ;
To cheer the saddened heart,
To wipe the weeping eyes,
And all the joys impart
That from hope's fountain rise :

This is my sole desire,
And this my highest aim ;
I for my book aspire
No greater prize to claim :
This, this is all I ask ;
And this if I have done,
My pleasant, welcome task
A rich reward has won.

THE END.

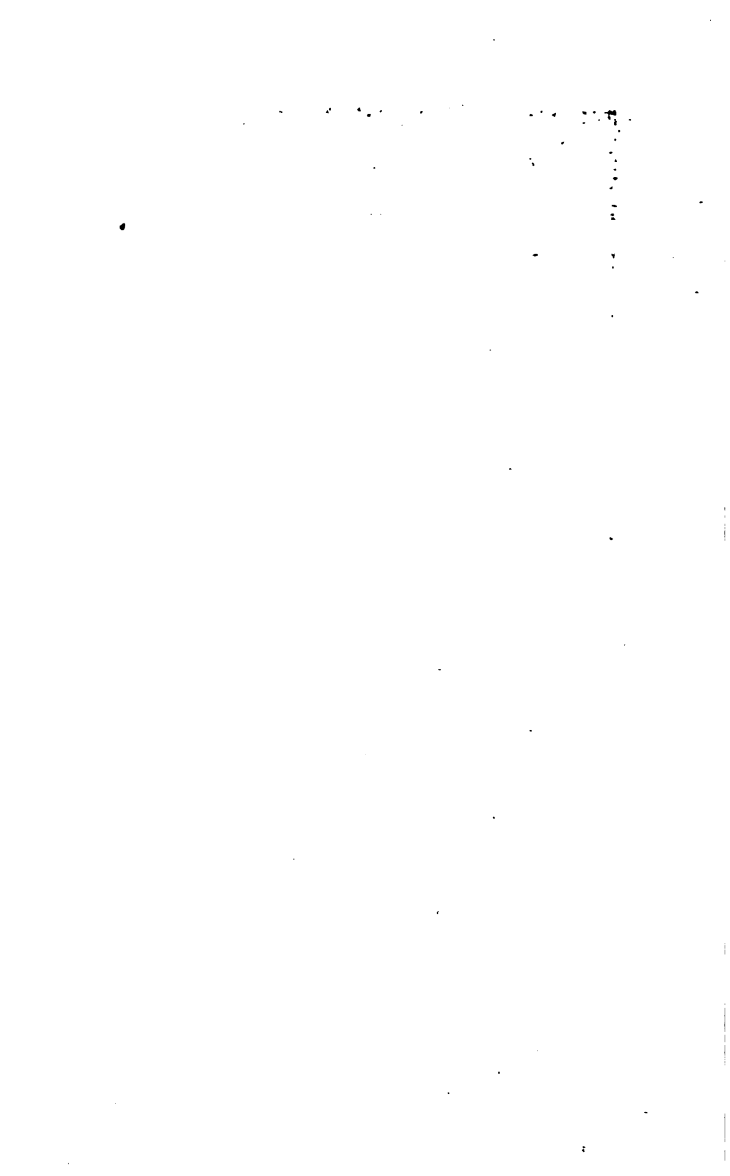
LONDON:

CASSELL, PETTER, AND GALPIN, BELLE SAUVAGE WORKS,
LUDGATE HILL, E.C.

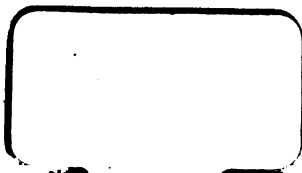
you for your eloquence, and its graceful
and generous "dedication".
not to put this down to intentional neglect,
but to the score of that "thief of time",
procrastination - the meaning to do
a thing and not doing it - a notorious
almost inevitable with those who have
much to do, and many letters to write.
It will serve me as a warning, and
remind me that

"What to-day is not a-doing,
Will tomorrow not be done."

I have read your volume with great
pleasure. It is written in a pure and
simple style, and a gentle spirit
permeates it throughout. I thank,



F



THE
EDUCATION

